



# SONDY POPE-ROBERTS

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## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

### Testimony

February 21, 2008

### SENATE BILL 486

Thank you Chairman Lehman and Committee Members for the opportunity to testify today on Senate Bill 486. As you may know, I am the author of its Assembly Companion, which does not yet have a bill number.

I introduced the companion to Senator Taylor's "Quality Teachers for Every Student Act" for the same reasons I drafted the "Transcript Protection" legislation we discussed earlier. I want every student in Wisconsin to have the opportunity to receive a quality education that will allow them to become productive citizens who will become assets to society.

Just because we do not monitor voucher schools within the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, doesn't mean we can ignore our obligation that those students receive a quality education, similar to that which their public school counterparts receive.

It is my conviction that the first step towards that goal is providing only quality teachers.

Licensing requirements ensure that teachers have received adequate training and education to be able to provide a solid learning environment for our children. This would include being able to recognize differences in abilities to learn, differences in teaching methods, and the ability to recognize a student's special needs, to name but a few of the many aspects necessary in providing a quality education for every student.

I will simply ask that you please support Senate Bill 486.

# LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

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HERE TO SERVE YOU!

**Senate Committee on Education  
Testimony of Senator Lena C. Taylor  
SB 486 – Quality Teachers for Every Student Act  
February 21, 2008**

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Members of the Committee, thank you for hearing Senate Bill 486. To say that lines are clearly drawn, where most legislators, educators, parents and community stakeholders are on issues, of the Milwaukee Parental Choice program, is probably an understatement.

Often accused of polarizing views and positions, many find it difficult to work with one another regarding the implementation, oversight, and accountability of the program. Inspire of these divisions, Milwaukee children and families have benefited most, when we as legislators, have put partisan politics and personal agendas aside, and come together for the best interest of the child.

The *Quality Teachers for Every Student Act* (SB 486) is an opportunity for us to do just that. Many of us are parents, grandparents, or guardians. Most of us have children that we care deeply about and want the very best for. We will stop at nothing to insure that they are well fed, well clothed, and well loved.

Understanding that their success in life is often tied to their early educational preparation, we work to get them in the best day cares, best schools, and assigned to the best teachers. In short, we want them to get the best education they possibly can.

To that end, how do we as parents, legislators, and individuals responsible for not only growing Wisconsin, but positioning our residents to be globally competitive, find it acceptable to have unlicensed, undereducated, and unprepared individuals teaching our children. As many of the state's adult residents, often the casualty of downsizing, plant closings, and outsourcing, work to re-tool, re-educate, and re-position themselves to compete in an ever competitive employment market, how can we not take note?

Many of these adults have found that a high school diploma is no longer enough. A bachelor's degree is generally needed to get you in the door. Often a masters degree, is what will get you hired. Why would we accept any less from those that educate our children?

Good intentions and a good heart do not equal a good education. Instruction from those, who thought so little of education, that they did not pursue their own needed tools, to become measurably proficient, is unacceptable.

Further, I do not understand why we would allow a two-tiered system of education in our state. One system being comprised of children educated by instructors who are required to have mastered their respective crafts and subjects, complete with yearly continuing education and training to keep them abreast of new technology and best practices.

To sanction anything less than that in the other system is unthinkable. At the very minimum we must ensure that children, regardless of where they attend school, are being taught by licensed or permit holding instructional staff.

Support of SB 486 ensures that those charged with the care and education of our most precious asset, will be verifiably capable and certified to teach our children.

In closing, I am reminded of something my grandmother used to say, "It does not matter where you live or the size of your home, but your house must be kept in order." I implore your assistance to get in order the education of our children. Thank you.



## State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

Senate Committee on Education  
February 21, 2008

### Department of Public Instruction Testimony on 2007 Senate Bill 486

Thank you to Chairperson Lehman and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Jennifer Kammerud. I am the legislative liaison for the Department of Public Instruction and am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 486 (SB 486) as it will increase the quality of education for students participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and provide protections for students attending these schools.

High quality teachers are critical to student success, this is recognized in federal law as well, under No Child Left Behind. The state has set forth expectations of what a teacher should know and be able to do before they may be licensed. These expectations are contained in Wisconsin's Quality Educator Initiative, also known as PI 34. Under PI 34.02 to receive a license to teach in Wisconsin, an applicant shall complete an approved program and demonstrate proficient performance in the knowledge, skills and dispositions under all of the following standards:

- (1) The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for pupils.
- (2) The teacher understands how children with broad ranges of ability learn and provides instruction that supports their intellectual, social, and personal development.
- (3) The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.
- (4) The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies, including the use of technology to encourage children's development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- (5) The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

(6) The teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

(7) The teacher organizes and plans systematic instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, pupils, the community, and curriculum goals.

(8) The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the pupil.

(9) The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effect of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

(10) The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support pupil learning and well being and who acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.

SB 486 would also provide additional safeguards for students. In order to be licensed an applicant must undergo a state and federal background check. The department also checks applicants against a national database of educators whose licenses were revoked in other states. The additional benefit of licensure in this regard is the ability to file complaints resulting in potential loss of license, which would bar an individual from teaching in a school.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.